

# **Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce**

## **Servicemen of the Year**

**6 July 05**

**THANK YOU-- MR. MEDINA-- FOR THAT KIND  
INTRODUCTION. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN--  
THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN  
YOU TODAY IN HONORING OUR SERVICEMEN  
AND WOMEN.**

**IN MANY RESPECTS, THESE YOUNG  
PEOPLE WE HONOR TODAY REPRESENT THE  
BEST OF OUR GREAT COUNTRY. TODAY'S  
SEVEN HONOREES REPRESENT WELL OVER  
TWO MILLION SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN WHO  
DEFEND FREEDOM TODAY AROUND THE  
GLOBE.**

**THEY SERVE– NOT FOR RECOGNITION –  
NOT FOR FINANCIAL REWARD -- BUT OUT OF A  
DEEP DESIRE TO SERVE AMERICA.**

**I'M PROUD TO COMMAND OVER FIVE  
THOUSAND SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN  
THROUGHOUT THE AMERICAS. OVER A  
THOUSAND OF THOSE TROOPS LIVE IN MIAMI  
AND SOUTH FLORIDA.**

**WE ARE INDEED FORTUNATE TO LIVE AND  
WORK IN THIS WONDERFUL COMMUNITY. MIAMI  
CAN BE JUSTLY PROUD OF SEVERAL  
IMPRESSIVE ACHIEVEMENTS – FIFTH IN THE  
WORLD AMONG TELECOMMUNICATIONS  
CENTERS, NUMBER FOUR NATIONALLY AMONG  
THE BEST CITIES FOR FAMILIES, THE NUMBER  
THREE COUNTY IN THE U.S. FOR NEW**

**BUSINESS GROWTH, AND NUMBER ONE AS THE  
BEST CITY FOR DOING BUSINESS WITH LATIN  
AMERICA.**

**AS GREAT AS THOSE STATISTICS ARE,  
THEY CANNOT CONVEY HOW WARMLY THE  
PEOPLE OF MIAMI HAVE EMBRACED  
SOUTHCOM. SINCE SOUTHCOM MOVED TO  
MIAMI IN 1997 -- YOU HAVE OPENED YOUR  
ARMS AND YOUR HEARTS TO THE PEOPLE OF  
SOUTHERN COMMAND. YOU GIVE MUCH TO  
SOUTHCOM AND I CAN SAY WITH ALL  
CERTAINTY -- THAT INVESTMENT PAYS BIG  
DIVIDENDS.**

**THE MEN AND WOMEN OF SOUTHCOM ARE  
YOUR NEIGHBORS. THEY ARE YOUR  
CHILDREN'S LITTLE LEAGUE COACHES. THEY**

**ARE VOLUNTEERS IN YOUR SCHOOLS--  
CHURCHES-- SYNAGOGUES AND MOSQUES.**

**AS OFF-DUTY VOLUNTEERS AND AS  
CITIZENS THEY MAKE A TREMENDOUS AND  
POSITIVE IMPACT IN OUR COMMUNITY. THE  
INCREDIBLE WORK THEY DO AS  
PROFESSIONALS --ON THE JOB--DOES MUCH  
TO FURTHER OUR COUNTRY'S SECURITY  
INTERESTS THROUGHOUT LATIN AMERICA AND  
THE CARIBBEAN.**

**FOR THE NEXT FEW MINUTES-- I WANT TO  
TELL YOU WHY THE WORK OF SOUTHCOM'S  
SERVICE MEMBERS IS SO IMPORTANT TO OUR  
COUNTRY AND TO THIS HEMISPHERE.**

**WHEN ONE LOOKS AT THE ECONOMIC –  
DEMOGRAPHIC -- AND CULTURAL TIES AMONG  
THE COUNTRIES OF THE AMERICAS -- IT  
BECOMES OBVIOUS THAT THE FUTURE  
SECURITY AND STABILITY OF LATIN AMERICA --  
THE CARIBBEAN -- AND THE UNITED STATES --  
ARE NOW -- MORE THAN EVER – LINKED  
TOGETHER IN A COMMON DESTINY.**

**IN 2002-- HISPANICS BECAME THE  
LARGEST AND FASTEST-GROWING MINORITY IN  
THE UNITED STATES. THE HISPANIC  
INFLUENCE IN THE UNITED STATES – IN  
SOCIETAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS – IS  
PROFOUND – POSITIVE –AND GROWING. IT IS  
ANTICIPATED THAT BY THE YEAR 2050-- ONE**

**QUARTER OF THE U.S. POPULATION WILL BE OF  
HISPANIC DESCENT.**

**MOST NORTH AMERICANS ASSUME THAT  
THE MIDDLE EAST IS OUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF  
IMPORTED PETROLEUM. THE FACT IS THAT  
LATIN AMERICA PROVIDES MORE OF OUR  
IMPORTED OIL THAN ALL THE MIDDLE EASTERN  
COUNTRIES COMBINED – WITH FOURTEEN  
PERCENT FROM VENEZUELA AND FIVE  
PERCENT FROM OTHER NATIONS IN THE  
SOUTHCOR AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY.**

**ECONOMICALLY-- THE TIES BETWEEN THE  
U.S. AND THE REGION ARE STRONGER THAN  
ONE MIGHT THINK. ALTHOUGH THE COMBINED  
POPULATION OF BRAZIL AND CHILE IS ONLY  
EIGHTEEN PERCENT OF THE COMBINED**

**POPULATION OF INDIA AND INDONESIA, THE UNITED STATES SOLD MORE THAN TWICE AS MUCH TO BRAZIL AND CHILE THAN TO INDONESIA AND INDIA COMBINED IN 2004.**

**THESE FACTS ARE ESPECIALLY RELEVANT TO THE GREATER MIAMI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND TO SOUTH FLORIDA. WITHIN THE UNITED STATES -- FLORIDA IS THE SINGLE LARGEST TRADING PARTNER WITH LATIN AMERICA -- GARNERING A 43 PERCENT SHARE OF ALL U.S. TRADE WITH THE REGION -- AND SELLING THOSE COUNTRIES ALMOST 9 BILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF GOODS ANNUALLY.**

**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO BE PARTNERS IN A HUGE --**

**MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL ECONOMIC  
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. I  
USE THE WORD “POTENTIAL” BECAUSE OUR  
GREATEST TRADE OPPORTUNITIES ARE AS YET  
-- UNREALIZED.**

**TO A GREAT EXTENT - THESE  
OPPORTUNITIES ARE HELD HOSTAGE BY A  
LACK OF SECURITY.**

**TODAY’S GLOBALIZATION HAS NOT ONLY  
ALLOWED COMMERCE TO RAPIDLY AND EASILY  
CROSS BORDERS -- BUT IT ALSO ALLOWS  
THREATS TO OUR WELL-BEING AND WAY OF  
LIFE TO DO THE SAME.**

**THE TRANSNATIONAL TERRORIST -- THE  
NARCO-TERRORIST -- THE ISLAMIC EXTREMIST  
FUNDRAISER AND RECRUITER --THE ILLICIT**

**TRAFFICKER -- THE MONEY LAUNDERER --THE  
KIDNAPPER -- AND THE GANG MEMBER HAVE  
ACCESS TO AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AN  
UNPRECEDENTED FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT  
AND ACTION. THIS DYNAMIC HAS LED TO THE  
EMERGENCE OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE  
CARIBBEAN AS THE WORLD LEADER IN A  
CATEGORY OF DUBIOUS DISTINCTION --  
VIOLENCE. WITH A HOMICIDE RATE OF NEARLY  
28 PER 100,000 PEOPLE-- LATIN AMERICA HAS  
ECLIPSED AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST AS  
THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS REGION.**

**TODAY'S LATIN AMERICA FACES A WIDE  
ARRAY OF THREATS THAT ARE EXTREMELY  
DIFFICULT TO TACKLE.**

**FIRST AND FOREMOST AMONG THESE THREATS IS TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM. ALTHOUGH WE DON'T CURRENTLY SEE ACTIVE ISLAMIC EXTREMIST TERRORIST CELLS IN THE REGION -- WE HAVE DETECTED A NUMBER OF ISLAMIC EXTREMIST GROUP FACILITATORS WHO PARTICIPATE IN LOGISTICAL AND FUNDRAISING SUPPORT ACTIVITIES -- SUCH AS MONEY LAUNDERING -- DOCUMENT FORGERY -- AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING.**

**A CLOSE RELATIVE OF TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM IS NARCO-TERRORISM. I'LL BE AMONG THE FIRST TO ADMIT THAT NOT ALL NARCO-TRAFFICKERS ARE TERRORISTS -- AND NOT ALL TERRORISTS ARE NARCO-**

**TRAFFICKERS -- BUT WE ARE SEEING MORE  
INSTANCES OF THE TWO ACTIVITIES BEING  
CLOSELY LINKED. LET ME TELL YOU WHY  
THAT'S IMPORTANT: THESE NARCO-  
TERRORIST GROUPS NO LONGER SOLELY RELY  
ON POPULAR LEGITIMACY AS A SOURCE OF  
POWER-- BUT ARE INSTEAD BECOMING  
AUTONOMOUS -- FUELED BY AN ENORMOUS  
SUPPLY OF DRUG MONEY.**

**GANGS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SHUT DOWN  
HUGE SECTIONS OF LARGE CITIES AT WILL.  
THIS GANG PROBLEM HAS HIT CENTRAL  
AMERICA ESPECIALLY HARD -- WITH  
ESTIMATES RANGING FROM 70,000 TO OVER  
200,000 GANG MEMBERS. REPORTEDLY --**

**THEIR PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME IS ILLICIT  
DRUG TRAFFICKING. ALTHOUGH THESE  
GANGS HAVE DEMONSTRATED AN  
UNPRECEDENTED LEVEL OF BRUTALITY --  
THEY ARE ANYTHING BUT SIMPLE. THESE  
GANGS ARE HIGHLY COMPLEX  
ORGANIZATIONS. THEY OFTEN TRAVEL AMONG  
CENTRAL AMERICAN NATIONS AND THE U.S.,  
WITH EASE - AND WHEN THEY FEEL PRESSURE  
IN ONE LOCATION OR ANOTHER-- THEY  
CONTINUE TO MOVE ON TO SAFER LOCATIONS.**

**THE PROBLEM OF KIDNAPPING IN THE  
REGION HAS GROWN INTO AN ENORMOUS  
SECURITY CHALLENGE. ALTHOUGH LATIN  
AMERICA ACCOUNTS FOR ONLY 10% OF THE**

**WORLD'S POPULATION-- 75% OF THE WORLD'S  
KIDNAPPINGS OCCUR THERE. AMONG THE TEN  
COUNTRIES WITH THE WORLD'S HIGHEST  
RATES OF KIDNAPPINGS-- FIVE ARE LATIN  
AMERICAN COUNTRIES.**

**NOW – THE FACT IS -- THESE THREATS DO  
NOT EXIST IN A VACUUM – THEY HAVE  
DEVELOPED OVER DECADES AND ARE FIRMLY  
ROOTED IN THE RELATED CONDITIONS OF  
POVERTY-- INEQUALITY-- AND CORRUPTION.**

**IN SPITE OF THE FREE MARKET ECONOMIC  
REFORMS AND THE GROWTH OF DEMOCRACY  
IN THE REGION IN THE 1990'S-- POVERTY IN  
LATIN AMERICA HAS GROWN BOTH IN  
ABSOLUTE NUMBERS AND AS A PERCENTAGE**

**OF THE OVERALL POPULATION. TODAY OVER FORTY-FOUR PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN ARE MIRED IN THE HOPELESSNESS AND SQUALOR OF POVERTY.**

**UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH EXACERBATES THE POVERTY PROBLEM. THE COUNTRY WITH THE LEAST ECONOMIC DISPARITY OF ALL LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES -- IS STILL WORSE THAN THE MOST UNEQUAL COUNTRY IN ALL OF EASTERN EUROPE.**

**AN HISTORICAL CLIMATE OF CORRUPTION IS WIDELY PREVALENT THROUGHOUT THE REGION. IT IS A CANCER FEEDING ON**

**ECONOMIC SYSTEMS -- DESTROYING  
INSTITUTIONS AND RUINING PEOPLE'S FAITH IN  
THEIR GOVERNMENT.**

**IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT MONEY IS A  
COWARD. NOWHERE IS THIS TRUER THAN IN  
OUR REGION. THE WORLD BANK ESTIMATED IN  
1998 THAT LATIN AMERICA'S PER CAPITA  
INCOME WOULD BE 25% HIGHER IF IT HAD A  
CRIME RATE SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE REST OF  
THE WORLD. BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF  
SECURITY -- FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT –  
THE LIFEBLOOD OF ECONOMIC GROWTH – IS  
GOING MORE TO ASIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST  
AND LESS TO LATIN AMERICA.**

**THE LACK OF SECURITY AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY THREATENS TO REVERSE DEMOCRACY'S HARD-WON PROGRESS. UNANSWERED GRIEVANCES AND UNFULFILLED PROMISES TO THE MARGINALIZED PEOPLES OF SOCIETY HAVE RESULTED IN DEEP-ROOTED DISSATISFACTION WITH DEMOCRACY AS A PROCESS AND AS AN INSTITUTION.**

**SINCE 1999 -- IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN -- TEN DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED PRESIDENTS HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM OFFICE BEFORE THE END OF THEIR TERM.**

**WITH ALL THE THREATS AND CHALLENGES I'VE MENTIONED-- AT THIS POINT YOU MAY BE**

**THINKING-- “OK, GENERAL-- NOW WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT IT?”**

**SOUTHERN COMMAND RECOGNIZES THAT THE THREATS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN TODAY ARE UNCONVENTIONAL. FOR THAT REASON -- SOUTHCOM’S OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IS NOT CONVENTIONALLY MILITARY. MUCH OF OUR MISSION IS ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH THE INTERAGENCY – DIPLOMACY -- AND COOPERATIVE EFFORTS WITH OUR PARTNER NATIONS. WE DEPLOY PLATOONS FOR TRAINING EXERCISES WITH OUR PARTNERS TODAY -- SO THAT WE DON’T HAVE TO DEPLOY DIVISIONS TOMORROW.**

**SOME OF SOUTHCOM'S INITIATIVES ARE  
STANDARD MILITARY-TO-MILITARY  
ENGAGEMENT -- NOT UNLIKE WHAT HAS TAKEN  
PLACE FOR MANY YEARS. BUT MUCH OF WHAT  
SOUTHCOM IS DOING TO ACCOMPLISH ITS  
MISSION TODAY HAS VERY LITTLE DOCTRINAL  
BASIS -- AND PRECIOUS LITTLE PRECEDENT.  
IN 2002 WE FORMED A JOINT INTERAGENCY  
COORDINATION GROUP THAT MEETS IN MY  
HEADQUARTERS. THE COORDINATION GROUP  
IS MADE UP OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM MANY  
US GOVERNMENT AGENCIES THAT DEAL WITH  
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN. OUR  
AGENDAS FOR THESE MEETINGS ARE WIDE-  
RANGING: COUNTERTERRORISM TO PORT  
SECURITY TO GANGS TO COUNTERING ILLICIT**

**TRAFFICKING OPERATIONS. WE SHARE  
INFORMATION -- EVALUATE COMMON  
CHALLENGES -- AND ARRIVE AT NEW WAYS TO  
COOPERATE AND COMPLEMENT WHAT OTHER  
AGENCIES ARE DOING. IT BEARS MENTIONING  
HERE THAT THE ONLY FEASIBLE LOCATION  
FOR THIS COORDINATION GROUP TO COME  
TOGETHER IS MIAMI, FLORIDA.**

**IN ADDITION TO BEING THE GATEWAY TO  
THE AMERICAS AND HOME OF 500  
MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES WITH GLOBAL  
REACH -- MIAMI IS ALSO THE COMMON NEXUS  
OF DOZENS OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES  
ORIENTED ON LATIN AMERICA AND THE  
CARIBBEAN. NOTHING CAN REPLACE**

**PERSONAL INTERACTION – AND NOTHING CAN  
REPLACE MIAMI AS A PLACE FOR THIS GROUP  
TO MEET AND WORK TOGETHER.**

**IN COLOMBIA -- SOUTHCOM PROVIDES  
TRAINING-- PLANNING ASSISTANCE – AND  
LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO THE COLOMBIAN  
MILITARY IN ITS FIGHT AGAINST NARCO-  
TERRORISTS. THIS SUPPORT HAS BEEN A KEY  
ELEMENT OF THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT’S  
PROGRESS IN REDUCING HOMICIDES--  
KIDNAPPINGS-- TERRORIST ACTIVITIES – AND  
IN MAKING ENORMOUS PROGRESS TO DEFEAT  
THE INSURGENTS THEY HAVE BATTLED FOR  
DECADES. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN COLOMBIA’S**

**HISTORY-- THERE IS GOVERNMENT PRESENCE  
IN EVERY MUNICIPALITY IN THE COUNTRY.**

**SOUTHCOM'S JOINT INTERAGENCY TASK  
FORCE IN KEY WEST-- FLORIDA-- IN  
CONJUNCTION WITH MULTINATIONAL AND  
INTERAGENCY EFFORTS-- DIRECTLY  
CONTRIBUTED LAST FISCAL YEAR TO THE  
SEIZURE OF OVER 217 METRIC TONS OF  
COCAINE -- AN APPROXIMATE WHOLESALE  
VALUE OF NEARLY FOUR BILLION DOLLARS.**

**THIS INTERDICTION DOES TWO THINGS: IT  
KEEPS THE UNITED STATES SAFER -- AND IT  
DENIES NARCO-TERRORISTS THE FUNDS THEY  
NEED TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE.**

**ALTHOUGH AS MILITARY PEOPLE --  
THERE'S LITTLE WE CAN DO TO DIRECTLY  
ATTACK THE PROBLEM OF POVERTY – WE CAN  
HELP TO MITIGATE ITS EFFECTS. OUR  
HUMANITARIAN EXERCISES BUILD DOZENS OF  
ROADS—WATER WELLS-- CLINICS-- AND  
SCHOOLS IN UNDERSERVED AREAS. LAST  
YEAR-- MEDICAL AND VETERINARY READINESS  
DEPLOYMENTS TREATED OVER 290,000 PEOPLE  
-- AND OVER 525,000 ANIMALS IN LATIN  
AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN-- ENHANCING  
THE HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF THOSE  
NEEDY PEOPLE.**

**SO, AS YOU CAN SEE, THE SECURITY,  
ECONOMIC WELL-BEING, AND DEMOCRATIC**

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION ARE CLOSELY  
INTERRELATED.**

**WE AT UNITED STATES SOUTHERN  
COMMAND WRESTLE WITH THESE  
CHALLENGES ON A DAILY BASIS.**

**JUST BEFORE THE SECOND WORLD WAR,  
PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT STATED  
PROPHETICALLY – AND I QUOTE --“THERE IS A  
MYSTERIOUS CYCLE IN HUMAN EVENTS. TO  
SOME GENERATIONS MUCH IS GIVEN. OF  
OTHER GENERATIONS MUCH IS EXPECTED.**

**THIS GENERATION OF AMERICANS HAS A  
RENDEZVOUS WITH DESTINY.” – END QUOTE --**

**AT SOUTHCOM -- WE DO OUR VERY BEST  
BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THAT “MYSTERIOUS  
CYCLE” HAS AGAIN COME FULL CIRCLE. WE  
BELIEVE THAT WE – TOO – MAY WELL HAVE A  
RENDEZVOUS WITH DESTINY. -- WE KNOW  
THAT AMERICA AND THE WORLD EXPECT MUCH  
OF US.**

**TODAY —TONIGHT -- AND TOMORROW --  
YOUR SERVICE MEMBERS ARE ON PATROL --  
ON WATCH -- ON ALERT -- AND UNDERWAY –  
SERVICE MEMBERS JUST LIKE THESE WE  
HONOR HERE TODAY. WE UNDERTAKE OUR  
MISSIONS WITH THE FULL WEIGHT OF THE  
KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT IS AT STAKE -- AND –**

**WITH THE ASSURANCE THAT WE HAVE THE  
SUPPORT OF OUR NATION AND ONE OF THE  
WORLD'S GREAT CITIES.**

**ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN  
COMMAND -- THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT  
AND THANK YOU FOR THE PRICELESS  
OPPORTUNITY TO HONOR THESE GREAT  
“SERVICE MEMBERS OF THE YEAR” – HERE  
TODAY.**

**GOD BLESS YOU AND GOD BLESS THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.**